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## REVIEWS.

*History of the New World Called America.* By EDWARD JOHN PAYNE, Fellow of University College. Vol. I. Oxford, at the University Press, 1892. — xxiii, 546 pp.

Mr. Payne's noteworthy volume is at once a concrete history, with definite limits of time and place, and a strikingly original study of the philosophy of history in general. Whether the completed work will be chiefly history or chiefly philosophy, one can hardly determine as yet from internal evidence, and Mr. Payne does not tell us in his preface or elsewhere whether he cares most for the story of the New World as a chapter of human life to be explained, or for the theory of civilization which he thinks it discloses, and by the aid of which he interprets events. Perhaps neither alternative quite describes his purpose; it might be more accurate to say that he has found himself unable to write American history intelligently or truthfully without reconstructing the philosophy of history, and that he therefore perceives in the evolution of social life on this continent the clearest revelation of the universal laws and causes of human progress. Either way, the careful reader does not turn many pages without discovering that Mr. Payne has entered upon an undertaking of great magnitude, boldly and independently conceived, and has brought to its execution an equipment of philosophical ability, learning, scholarship and literary skill.

The present volume includes an opening book on the discovery of the New World and a considerable part of a second book on aboriginal America. Superficially, therefore, it resembles the first volume of Mr. Fiske's series. The two works resemble each other, too, in their thoroughgoing purpose to account for the course of events before and since the voyages of Columbus in terms of a naturalistic or evolutionist philosophy. But beneath this likeness there are radical differences. Readers of Mr. Fiske's early essays will remember that his first serious writing, published in the *North American Review* when he was nineteen years old, was a trenchant criticism of Buckle's explanation of civilization in terms of such purely physical causes as topography, soil and climate. In his latest work he still holds to his youthful notion that history and heredity are more important social causes than environment, and we find

him, accordingly, explaining the downfall of Spanish and French power in the New World in terms of the inherited psychology and institutions of those races. Mr. Payne, on the contrary, revives, with the modifications and limitations suggested by later and better knowledge, the view of Buckle. His account of the discovery, going over the ground and much of the material already made familiar in the pages of Winsor, Fiske and other recent writers, is valuable chiefly for the prominence it gives to such purely physical causes as ocean currents and continental configuration in determining the time and circumstances of the great voyages; while in the second book we have a study of the influence of physical geography upon aboriginal culture and, through the latter, upon colonization and white civilization, which surpasses in penetration and suggestiveness all previous work in this direction.

This second book demands all the space that can be accorded to the entire volume in a brief review. Works on American history usually have described the aboriginal life, but as a thing apart, in no way entering as an efficient cause into the sequence of white civilization. In an argument of great vigor, based on facts that everybody knew, but to the full significance of which all historians have been blind, Mr. Payne shows that the direction taken by American history cannot be explained by European influences only. Under papal authority Spain became possessed of the whole continent except that part of tropical South America, the north-east angle, which fell to Portugal. Her claim was independent of settlement or colonization. England and France could found claims only on discovery, actual occupation and settlement. Yet when they entered seriously upon the work of colonization, all those portions of North America best adapted to civilization of an European type were still virgin land, because Spain had expended her energies in conquering and plundering the populations of Mexico, Central America and Peru. Spain followed this policy because these populations, unlike the northern tribes, were politically and religiously organized, permanently established on the soil, agricultural and industrial in habits, and rich enough to be worth robbing. It is evident, therefore, that the causes which had determined their development and confined it to regions in which white civilization could never flourish — regions which to-day, in fact, are essentially aboriginal in population and modes of life — were the true antecedents of American history, and that they were American, not European, causes.

Now those causes, so important and far-reaching, were the conditions which enabled the populations of the table lands, and no others, to advance from a natural to an artificial food supply. This transition, according to Mr. Payne, has been everywhere, in the Old World or in the New, the true beginning of civilization. This is the key to his theory of history, of social evolution. Physical conditions determine the possibilities of change, because they determine the distribution of animals that admit of domestication, of plants that admit of cultivation. In these respects the Old World possessed an immense advantage over the New, in which there was no animal larger than the llama fit for both food and labor. Tribes that have not begun to depend chiefly on an artificial food supply are still in savagery. Because a meat diet is preferred to vegetables and grain, most of the tribes of North America, lacking animals that could be domesticated, remained in savagery as hunters. When the transition to an artificial food supply has been accomplished, it, in turn, transforms social organization, religion, thought and morals. When these changes are completed a population has become civilized. If they are accomplished on the material side only, by the acquisition of artificial food, while thought and manners remain savage, the population is barbarian. To reach true civilization, a progressing people must be able to maintain a warrior class to protect the agricultural class against surrounding savagery. No American population got so far as this, and none, therefore, ever got beyond barbarism; and even barbarism was maintained only in those regions which were at once cultivable and relatively inaccessible, namely, the mountain table-lands.

Such, in brief, is the theory. Criticism must be even more brief, and therefore very incomplete. The interpretation of civilization in economic terms which Mr. Payne is attempting is a long stride in the right direction. He has seen, what all sound work in sociology and economics has been disclosing for a dozen years or more, that civilization is at bottom an economic fact, and that it is the economic phenomena in society that ultimately shape the legal, the political and even the religious conceptions and activities. The relation of religion to the economic basis of society Mr. Payne examines with great care, and some of his observations are extremely shrewd, as, for example, where he explains how household and tribal gods have to undergo a selection, and that those which survive owe their fortune to their supposed utility, having brought health, luck or fertility; or again, where he suggests that monotheism has an

advantage over polytheism in that it reduces the costs of sacrifice, and that therefore on economic, as well as on rational and emotional grounds, a non-sacrificial and spiritual religion like Christianity is the only one compatible with civilization of a high type. But in these explanations Mr. Payne does not, after all, go far enough, and this is the chief fault of his work. He does not show us how or why a change from the natural food supply to an artificial supply may or must take place under given circumstances, or why, after it has taken place it must, rather than does or may, effect social transformations. These are problems that can be dealt with only through an employment of those modern theorems of utility, cost and value that have been elaborated in recent political economy. Their application to sociological questions cannot be long delayed.

A minor criticism may be made in closing. Mr. Payne's notions as to the origin of spirit worship and of gods are by no means clear. He brushes aside Mr. Spencer's ghost theory with small respect, and evidently thinks that a belief in spirits precedes all savage reasoning on dreams, shadows, *etc.* The whole controversy on animism *vs.* ghostism is becoming absurd. All the facts yet adduced on either side are most easily and naturally explained by the supposition that the savage interpretations of causation which are known respectively as animism and the ghost theory, are both too subtle and complicated to be primitive. They are slowly differentiated from a jumble of ideas that we can now recognize as belonging partly to one class and partly to another, but which were hopelessly confused at the dawning of human thought. Whatever the difficulties presented by any explanation, they are nothing to Mr. Payne's amazing assumption that spirits were "invented." On the other hand, what Mr. Payne says on the origin of totemism is admirable.

FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS.

*The Eve of the French Revolution.* By EDWARD J. LOWELL.

Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1892. — viii, 408 pp.

Two great historians have already written, from totally different standpoints, elaborate works on the *ancien régime*. But both de Tocqueville and Taine pursued their investigations merely as introductory to studies on the French Revolution itself, and behind every line they wrote the influence of that great upheaval of society may be seen. Both these writers endeavored to show that the